

## Indiana Commission for Early Learning and School Readiness Meeting Minutes for November 16, 2004

### I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mary Downes welcomed the Commission members, and reported that Dr. Reed had a family emergency and would not be able to attend. Commission members in attendance included:

Mary Downes, Governor's Chief of Staff, South Bend, co-chair  
Rep. Ralph Ayres, Chesterton, representing the House of Representatives  
Patricia G. Burton, Indianapolis, representing public school principals  
Mary E. Davis, Richmond, representing full-day kindergarten teachers  
Dr. Brent Leichty, Bourbon, representing parents  
Marlane Rae Tisdale, Indianapolis, representing local school boards  
Lynn Silvey, Pendleton, representing parents  
Dr. Kay Harmless, Indianapolis, representing the Indiana Child Care Fund  
David Holt, Indianapolis, representing business  
A. Nanette Bowling, Kokomo, representing Head Start providers  
Evelyn Ridley-Turner, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (Dept. of Correction)  
Dr. Gregory Wilson, Indianapolis (Marion Co.), ex-officio, non-voting member (Dept. of Health) by proxy, Dr. Judy Ganser  
Dianna Wallace, New Castle, representing the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children  
Debbie Beeler, Mitchell, representing communities  
Timothy Dunnuck, Bloomington, representing the Child Care Center (Indiana University)  
Dr. Carol Touloukian, M.D., Bloomington, representing pediatricians  
Britt Magneson, South Bend, representing curriculum development specialists

Mary Downes [addressed](#) the future work of the Commission [since the November](#) election. She stated that the ELSR Commission was created [by an](#) executive order from Governor Kernan, and that all such [executive](#) orders end when the outgoing Governor's term [concludes](#) (January 10, 2005). Mary reported that she has spoken to Governor-elect Daniel's transition team and [has](#) recommended that the work of the Commission continue. The initial report created by ELSRC [will](#) be shared with the transition team. Dr. Reed [will](#) also provide her recommendations regarding the ELRSC to the transition team. Mary spoke positively about the report being an "official vehicle" to move [this](#) important work forward.

Mary directed the Commission members to the [draft document of the recommendations of the](#) four work groups – Full-day Kindergarten, Ensuring Access, Quality and Coordination, and Parent Support – [including](#) discussion points. She encouraged members to provide feedback as requested via email regarding agreement/[endorsement of the](#) recommendations. The report will recognize the level of agreement (i.e. percentage of approval and disapproval) and prioritization. Today, she stated that each group would [be given](#) the time to present their recommendations [as well as](#) time to refine their work.

Tim Dunnuck spoke briefly about a study he found on the Internet from the Economic Policy Institute reporting the fiscal benefits of high quality preschool and childcare. The study came to him through the Child Care Information Exchange. He stated that the study provides good evidence of what early childhood educators have been saying for years about the importance of early care and education.

Mary Downes asked for approval of the minutes from the October meeting. Dr. Carol Touloukian moved for approval of minutes, and Dr. Kay Harmless seconded.

## **II. Work Group Task and Process**

Rilyn Gipson asked the groups to work for ten minutes on clarifying and updating their **group** recommendations recorded and typed by Commission staff. She stated that the work groups **would** briefly report out to the entire group for questions and comments, and then have **another opportunity** to finalize their thoughts and add further detail if necessary. Tim Dunnuck again facilitated the Quality and Coordination group, and Brit Magnuson **in the absence of Dr. Denna Renbarger** facilitated the Full-day Kindergarten table.

## **III. Work Session in Groups**

### Group Reporting and Questions/Comments:

*For a frame of reference, see the document “October Work Session Notes” in the Commission Meetings section on the ELSRC website at: <http://www.earlylearning.in.gov>.*

### Quality and Coordination:

- Report- Tim Dunnuck spoke about the recommendations and brainstorming ideas that the group worked on (see October Work Session Notes).
- Questions/Comments-
  - Carol Touloukian asked if there was any kind of federal standard for defining “quality.” Tim replied that he would recommend the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards. Carol recommended to Tim that he include that in his recommendation.
  - Dianna Wallace encouraged the group to look at teacher licensure to focus on quality processes in terms of preparation. Examining this process would be a way to improve quality with little cost.
  - Brent Liechty asked for clarification about childcare homes and family day cares. Tim replied that the standards and regulations required of homes and centers are uneven and unfair. Church programs and centers are also exempt from licensing.
  - Judy Ganser asked for more specific wording in the recommendation regarding his statement about the “leveling the playing field.”

### Ensuring Access:

- Report- Dianna Wallace spoke about the issue of making sure every child has access to high quality programs to prepare them for school. This group had done work since the last meeting.
  - Comprehensive statewide campaign related to the importance to early childhood, and it needs to be directed by multiple partners.
  - Provision of access in every community for high quality preschool programs for children. Build on what currently exists (not public school, but existing community programs)
  - Defining “academically at-risk”. Working poor is 185% poverty or below and children with disabilities.
  - Build and hold accountable programs to the Indiana Early Childhood Foundations that currently exist.
- Questions/Comments-
  - Carol Touloukian suggested a recommendation about making sure kids are healthy when they move forward. The Head Start model provides some provisions that relate to health needs. She also spoke about screening standards (federal Medicaid standards).
  - Tim Dunnuck asked how to define academically “at-risk”. Dianna spoke about its connection to the P-16 plan. She spoke of the desire to not base this definition only on income.
  - Judy Ganser asked about the addition of recommendations that address mental health, developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities, and access for these children to early childhood services.
  - Marlane Tisdale stated her agreement with Tim’s suggestion about the definition of quality as determined by the NAEYC.

### Full Day Kindergarten:

- Report- Britt Magneson acknowledged that much work still needed to be done in their group. Today they will talk about:
  - Further examining funding ideas from the Early Learning Trust proposal by Governor Kernan
  - Convincing taxpayers based on credible research
  - Changing the kindergarten entrance date to September 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Supporting and defining high quality kindergarten and providing professional development
  - Emphasizing the voluntary nature of full day kindergarten
- Questions/Comments-
  - Marlane Tisdale stated her support for the Governor’s proposal and moving forward. She also reiterated her frustration with Indiana’s current kindergarten entrance date of July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Mary Downes clarified her understanding of the major obstacles for changing the entrance date for kindergarten. Some of the notes from previous meetings stated that many teachers object to the notion, but the main obstacle is funding.

- Bernie Hannon (State Budget Agency) responded to Mary's question about cost for changing the entrance date. He replied that he does not have a "hard number," but will work on coming up with the information.
- Marlane acknowledged that there is some resistance by teachers who are not adequately trained in teaching standards in a developmentally appropriate way.

#### Parents:

- Repot- Carol Touloukian stated that her group had five strategies and had made some minor changes to the document. The strategies are as follows:
  - Establish a statewide literacy coalition
  - Governor's summit on the importance literacy
  - Creating a government link to a website with resources for families
  - Multi-layered campaign promoting literacy
  - Incorporating "life skills" into high school curriculum for potential parents
- Question-
  - Dianna Wallace replied that the already-established statewide literacy coalition, and would they propose building on this former coalition or creating a new one. The coalition used to be in the state library, but no longer exists.

#### Group Work:

The groups went back to work in individual groups for the next hour. They were charged with making the recommendations and action steps as clear as possible. Some of the members shifted groups to [help balance the numbers in each work group](#). After today, [Commission members](#) would be asked to endorse and prioritize each recommendation via email. The latest recommendations would be sent to [Commission members at the beginning of the next week after being finalized and formatted](#).

#### **IV. Closing Comments/Adjourn**

[Following the groups work session](#), Mary Downes [adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and](#) announced the next meeting time and place – Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm, Government Center South, Conference Room B.